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## EPA Completes Demolition of Manville Buildings

**BOSTON ---** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency joined New Hampshire officials and citizens today in celebrating the successful completion of cleanup work at the Johns Manville hazardous waste site in Nashua, N.H. This cooperative effort included the removal of two large manufacturing buildings, equipment and contaminated soil from the facility. Marked by the planting of a tree, the cleanup will allow for the redevelopment of this City-owned property.

"This victory is testimony to the success that partnership can achieve, not only because the buildings and contamination are gone, but because of the spirit in which it was accomplished," said John P. DeVillars, administrator for EPA's New England office. "This represents a victory for the City of Nashua and for the EPA hazardous waste clean-up program. True cooperation, respect and tenacity among all the participants in this effort have succeeded in breaking the bounds of bureaucracy."

In response to an emergency request by the state, EPA activities at the site began in the summer of 1995. Recognizing that a long term cleanup strategy was needed to address problems at the site, in 1996, EPA began the removal of asbestos-containing material on the site and commenced the demolition of collapsing site buildings, with the ultimate goal being to return this site to beneficial economic use. Working with local and state agencies and community groups, EPA invested \$6 million into the effort.

Over the course of the cleanup, more than 65,000 tons of asbestos-contaminated debris was taken to the Nashua landfill for disposal under an agreement with the City of Nashua. The total cost of the cleanup was \$20 million.

"This is a wonderful example of federal, state and local cooperation resulting in the elimination of a long standing hazardous waste site and thereby further enhancing the already high quality of life in the #1 city in America," said Nashua Mayor Donald Davidson.

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"It has been an honor to be involved in this truly cooperative effort for the past two years. Working with the Mayor, city officials, New Hampshire DES, and the EPA, we were able to help this project come in under budget and on schedule. The Johns Manville site is a rewarding success story, and a tribute to the determined citizens of Nashua. I was proud to have played a role in getting additional federal dollars," said Senator Bob Smith, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. "With Nashua's status as the number one place to live in America, I am sure this land will be a prime commodity for redevelopment and economic growth in the region."

"This project is a perfect example of what can be achieved when federal, state and local officials work together to coordinate resources and develop innovative approaches to demolition challenges to bring this \$20 million project to completion later this week -- on time and on budget," stated Representative Charles Bass.

"A very real threat to public health and the well being of nearly 13,000 people who live within a mile of the Manville site has been resolved by the determined effort of local, state and federal government," said Dr. Phillip J. O'Brien, Waste Management Director of the NH Department of Environmental Services. Dr. O'Brien gave particular credit to the Neighborhood Task Force and its chair, Bonnie St. Pierre, for their persistent and effective participation in the cleanup effort.

"The Johns Manville site represents a successful example of interagency collaboration to address a major environmental hazard in the Nashua community," said Jeff Schaub, Director of the Office of Health Management in the NH Department of Health and Human Services. "This successful collaborative effort showed the necessity and value of early involvement and proper planning by public health agencies to protect the health and well being of New Hampshire's citizens from environmental hazards."

From 1900 to 1985, the Johns Manville property was home to an asbestos product manufacturing facility. During its 85 years of operation, manufacturing wastes containing asbestos, PCBs and other hazardous materials were stored or buried throughout the two site buildings and the surrounding property. Located within a one mile radius of the site are 13 schools, a hospital, and 13 elderly and low-income housing developments.

Despite the City's efforts to repair and maintain surrounding fence and provide consistent surveillance, trespassing was frequent and the risk of fire was constant. The site was condemned by the City of Nashua in October of 1994 to avoid a potential public health hazard and to prevent trespassers from entering the buildings. As a result of the heavy snowfall in 1996, several roof sections of the site buildings collapsed, increasing the potential for an asbestos release to the surrounding neighborhood, and creating the need for quick, concerted action.

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